



Speech by

**Hon. K. LINGARD**

**MEMBER FOR BEAUDESERT**

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Hansard 20 June 2001

### **LANG PARK**

**Hon. K. R. LINGARD** (Beaudesert—NPA) (6.21 p.m.): It is quite amazing that this government has got itself into the problem that it has. I am sure that some of the backbenchers must be shaking their heads and saying, 'How is this possible after four years?' It is not as though Labor has just come to government and is trying to make a decision about Lang Park. Labor has been in government for four years and still it has got itself into this extremely controversial position.

One of the most significant reasons it got itself into that position was that the Premier said there would be no public money spent on Lang Park, that the support would all come from corporate bodies. Of course, the support did not come and has not come from corporate bodies. So the government has been stuck with the statement that there will be no public money spent on this project. So the government has had to make these decisions, quite obviously with not enough support from the corporate companies.

The government also had to get the Broncos across. The one significant thing about the Broncos at ANZ Stadium is that every cent generated through the turnstiles of ANZ goes into the pockets of a private company. However, most of the seats at Lang Park are taken by life members. Now there has to be a complete reorganisation of Lang Park and the Lang Park Trust, because the government is not going to get the Broncos back there if many life members go through the gates. The government has to adopt the same structure as applies at ANZ Stadium.

I agree with what the Premier said when he quoted 'Gillie'. A few of us on this side of the House have always said that Lang Park should have been the spot chosen. Mick Veivers always said that Lang Park was going to be the one. So those opposite should not start throwing up the angle that we were opposed to Lang Park. What we oppose now is exactly what the government is doing.

Not many people realise that the Bledisloe Cup is run by a private company. A private company will go to all parts of Australia and say, 'What can you give us to run the Bledisloe Cup?' Unless this company can put the Bledisloe Cup on at a place where there are a large number of people coming in, such as the Melbourne Cricket Ground, it will not get a return. So Brisbane will never be able to compete against places such as Melbourne for an event such as the Bledisloe Cup. I support the expansion of a place such as Lang Park. In fact, I do not believe that Lang Park is going to be big enough. How will we ever be able to compete for the Bledisloe Cup when the Melbourne Cricket Ground has a capacity of 110,000 while Lang Park will have a capacity of only 60,000? It will be very difficult to win the right to host such an event.

But what did we see happen in an effort to solve the problem of the Premier saying that no public money would be used for this project? We saw the poker machine levy introduced for hotels. We had to see a separate entity, and that has been brought in in today's legislation. Labor's backbench members should watch what happens with this separate entity and remember my story about ANZ Stadium. Somehow we have to stop all the current life members of Suncorp-Metway Stadium getting free entry into Lang Park. We also have to work out what happens to the cost of the stadium—\$110 million—that was built in around 1992. Who has looked at the costs of that? Where is all that money going to go?

The government has had to hide all the facts. How does it hide all of the facts? Remember: it always quotes Fitzgerald—monitoring the government with committees. Can the members of the Public Works Committee tell me what has now been decided? Of course, the last time I stated this I was

referred to the ethics committee. Now the government is going to try to stop me saying these sorts of things by referring me to the ethics committee. But members of the Public Works Committee know what has happened recently. I have not seen the Public Accounts Committee come out saying, 'We will investigate Lang Park.' I have not seen the minister come out. I know that the Public Works Committee is not going to have a look at it. I have heard that through the grapevine. I know that the PAC is not going to have a look at it. But the Minister for State Development should be able to say, 'Let the PAC have a look at the Lang Park development. Let the Public Works Committee have a look at it.' But he is not saying that. He has to hide these things.

The government hides this through the Auditor-General. The government does not have a performance based Auditor-General. Most other states have an Auditor-General who will turn around and say, 'This money is spent incorrectly.' This government does not have that. This government has an Auditor-General who looks at the invoices and the statements and says, 'Yes, the money has been spent correctly, as per the invoices.' So the government is trying to close these processes up all the time.

We have a minister now making decisions—decisions which will be hidden by cabinet. These decisions will not be able to be discovered and scrutinised through the FOI process. They will all be put through cabinet and once again the whole thing will be hushed up. So there is no scrutiny by the Auditor-General, no scrutiny by the Public Works Committee and no scrutiny by the Public Accounts Committee. The whole process has been hidden.

The end result will obviously be a magnificent stadium, and that is what the government is waiting for. The government will wait for a magnificent stadium and then say to the public, 'What a great job we have done. We have hidden the whole thing, all the way through. We have a separate entity—an entity which can raise all the funds that it wants. It is not monitored by the government. It raises all these funds and spends them itself.' What is going to happen to the life memberships at Lang Park?

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